

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MAPUTO 00291 230748Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DHA-02 ACDA-07

MCT-01 /090 W

-----230804Z 050778 /17

R 221250Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5600

INFO AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MAPUTO 0291

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MZ

SUBJECT: RUMORS ABOUT ATTEMPTS ON MACHEL'S LIFE AND SECURITY
SITUATION IN MOZAMBIQUE.

REF: LILONGWE 0388 (NOTAL)

1. DURING MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR STEVENSON ON MARCH 11, MALAWIAN PRESIDENT HASTINGS BANDA INDICATED (PARA. 6 REFTEL) THAT THERE WAS A RECENT UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT ON LIFE OF PRESIDENT MACHEL IN WHICH TANZANIAN AMBASSADOR TO MOZAMBIQUE OBED KATIKAZA WAS FATALLY WOUNDED. UN OFFICIAL WHO WAS TRANSITING SOUTH AFRICA EARLIER THIS MONTH INFORMED US THAT SIMILIAR ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ATTEMPTED ATTACK ON MAHCEL AND DEATH OF KATIKAZA WERE BROADCAST ON
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PAGE 02 MAPUTO 00291 230748Z

SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION NEWS MARCH 5. LILONGWE REFTEL, ALSO QUOTING BANDA, STATED THAT SECURITY SITUATION IN NORTHERN PART OF MOZAMBIQUE HAD REACHED A POINT WHERE MACHEL COULD NOT TRAVEL TO BEIRA, NACALA OR NAMPULA.

2. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, RUMORS ABOUT ATTACK ON MACHEL, ARE COMPLETELY UNFOUNDED. SINCE ALLEGED ATTACK - SOMETIME DURING

FIRST WEEK OF MARCH - MACHEL HAS CONTINUED TO FOLLOW ROUTINE SCHEDULE. THERE HAS BEEN NO VISIBLE INCREASE IN SECURITY AROUND MACHEL OR HIS RESIDENCE. HE HAS MET AND BEEN PHOTOGRAPHED WITH NUMBER OF SENIOR FOREIGN DIGNITARIES, INCLUDING BRITISH SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER LORD CARRINGTON.

3. AMBASSADOR KATIKAZA WAS NOT WOUNDED OR KILLED IN ANY ATTACK ON MACHEL. KATIKAZA HAS BEEN SEEN AT VARIETY OF DIPLOMATIC FUNCTIONS BY AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS. HE APPEARS TO BE IN PERFECTLY GOOD HEALTH. DURING ONE GATHERING KATIKAZA PERSONALLY TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT RUMORS ABOUT AN ATTEMPT ON MACHEL'S LIFE IN HIS PRESENCE WERE ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE. KATIKAZA ALSO DENIED HAVING BEEN SHOT.

4. SECURITY SITUATION IN MOZAMBIQUE REMAINS CALM. ALTHOUGH EXTENSIVE AND MOUNTING FOOD SHORTAGES HAS CAUSED SOME GRUMBLING THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN URBAN AREAS LIKE MAPUTO AND BEIRA, THIS HAS NOT LED TO ANY ANTI-GOVERNMENT AGITATION. IN MAPUTO, MILITARY PRESENCE IS MINIMAL AND THERE ARE FEW SOLDIERS ON THE STREET. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, SITUATION IN BEIRA, WHERE MEETING OF FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WAS HELD LAST WEEK, IS SAME. IF THERE IS ANY SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO MACHEL AND FRELIMO, IT HAS NOT YET SURFACED.

5. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR SECURITY SITUATION AS IT AFFECTS MACHEL AND MOZAMBIQUE AND WILL REPORT AS CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT.

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PAGE 03 MAPUTO 00291 230748Z

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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